

it is only natural that Europe assume increasing leadership and responsibility. I welcome the European Union's commitment to play a leading role in the stabilization and development of the region. I similarly welcome the willingness of our Allies to provide the bulk of the NATO task force poised to collect the insurgents' weapons after a peaceful settlement in Macedonia. The cooperation of the United States, NATO, and the EU in Macedonia is a model that we can build upon in the future.

More than 30 countries—NATO Allies, NATO partners, and other friends—are, together with America, providing forces here in Kosovo. We understand that America's contribution is essential, both militarily and politically. We will not draw down our forces in Bosnia or Kosovo precipitously or unilaterally. We came in together, and we will go out together. But our goal is to hasten the day when peace is self-sustaining, when local, democratically elected authorities can assume full responsibility, and when NATO's forces can go home. This means that we must reorganize and reenergize our efforts to build civil institutions and promote rule of law. It also means that we must step up our efforts to transfer responsibilities for public security from combat forces to specialized units, international police, and ultimately local authorities. NATO's commitment to the peace of this region is enduring, but the stationing of our forces here should not be indefinite.

The American soldiers here at Camp Bondsteel—and at bases and on patrol elsewhere in Kosovo and in Bosnia—symbolize America's commitment to building the better, broader, more peaceful Europe that is within our grasp. We are very proud of our soldiers and of the American diplomats and civil police who work alongside them. Together with our Allies and friends and the people of the Balkans, we are confident that we will reach this common goal.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Reporting on the Deployment of Military Forces for Stabilization of Areas of the Former Yugoslavia

July 24, 2001

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

In my report to the Congress of January 25, 2001, I provided information on the deployment of combat-equipped U.S. Armed Forces to Bosnia and Herzegovina and other states in the region in order to participate in and support the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)-led Stabilization Force (SFOR). The SFOR began its mission and assumed authority from the NATO-led implementation force on December 20, 1996. I am providing this supplemental report, consistent with the War Powers Resolution, to help ensure that the Congress is kept fully informed on continued U.S. contributions in support of peacekeeping efforts in the former Yugoslavia.

The U.N. Security Council authorized Member States to continue SFOR for a period of 12 months in U.N. Security Council Resolution 1357 of June 21, 2001. The mission of SFOR is to provide a focused military presence in order to deter hostilities, stabilize and consolidate the peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, contribute to a secure environment, and provide, within its means and capabilities, selective support to key areas and key civil implementation organizations.

The U.S. force contribution to SFOR in Bosnia and Herzegovina is approximately 3,800 personnel. United States personnel comprise just under 20 percent of the total SFOR force of approximately 19,500 personnel. During the first half of 2001, 19 NATO nations and 17 others, including Russia, provided military personnel or other support to SFOR. Most U.S. forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina are assigned to Multinational Division, North, centered in the city of Tuzla. Other U.S. military personnel are deployed to other countries in the region in

support of SFOR. This includes approximately 500 U.S. military personnel presently deployed to Hungary, Croatia, and Italy in order to provide logistical and other support. The U.S. forces continue to support SFOR efforts to apprehend persons indicted for war crimes. In the last 6 months, U.S. forces have not sustained any combat-related fatalities.

I have directed the participation of U.S. Armed Forces in these operations pursuant to my constitutional authority to conduct U.S. foreign relations and as Commander in Chief and Chief Executive.

I am providing this report as part of my efforts to keep the Congress fully informed about developments in Bosnia and Herzegovina and other states in the region. I will continue to consult closely with the Congress regarding our efforts to foster peace and stability in the former Yugoslavia. Sincerely,

George W. Bush

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Robert C. Byrd, President pro tempore of the Senate. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 25.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Congressional Leaders and an Exchange With Reporters

July 25, 2001

The President. It's my honor to welcome to the White House Members from the Senate and the House, Members who are concerned about American foreign policy, to give them a briefing about my trip to Europe.

I'm going to talk about how we agreed that we need to expand trade, how we also agreed how we need to help nations who are less fortunate than our Nation. I look forward to having a very confidential briefing about my meeting with President Putin and the hope and promise I see for a constructive relationship.

I also am aware that there are some foreign policy matters in the Congress. And I urge Congress to deal fairly with Mexico and to not treat the Mexican truck industry in an unfair fashion, that I believe strongly we can

have safety measures in place that will make sure our highways are safe. But we should not single out Mexico. Mexico is our close friend and ally, and we must treat them with respect and uphold NAFTA and the spirit of NAFTA.

I also fully understand that foreign policy is best when conducted in a bipartisan fashion, and I so very much appreciate the chairman, I spoke to the chairman—both chairmen—before my trip overseas this time and before my trip last time overseas. And I take their advice very seriously and counsel very seriously. It helps for us to continue to communicate, particularly when it comes to foreign policy.

So thank you all for coming. I'll be glad to answer maybe one or two questions.

Patients' Bill of Rights

Q. Mr. President, on the Patients' Bill of Rights there is some talk that the House Republicans are now planning to schedule a vote later, perhaps as late as September. Is that a recognition on the part of the party and its leadership that you don't have the votes to get what you want on that issue?

The President. I am hopeful we'll get a bill I can sign. And I appreciate so very much the hard work that's going on, particularly now in the House of Representatives, to bring a bill that is fair to patients. There seems to be a—there was a lot of negotiations going on when I was gone, and there still seems to be a lot of talk. And obviously, we'd like to get this bill finished and on my desk and a bill I can sign.

I laid out the principles that would allow me to sign a bill, and I still stand by those principles. But I can report we're making pretty good progress, it seems like.

Yes, Steve [Steve Holland, Reuters].

Oil Prices

Q. Mr. President, OPEC is about to cut production by a million barrels a day. What is that going to do to the already struggling economy?

The President. Steve, it is very important for there to be stability in a marketplace. I read some comments from the OPEC ministers who said this was just a matter to make